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ABSTRACT

Instructional materials entitled "Reading Polish 2," second language course materials for teacher-assisted, mastery-based, self-paced instruction, are described and their uses discussed. The self-contained course is the eighth in a series of Polish individualized instruction materials, and is designed to be used by the student by working through the book's five units sequentially, in consultation with a teacher when necessary. It provides authentic reading materials and teaches five skills: to read and think critically, to separate fact from opinion, to recognize some different literary devices and styles, to use existing knowledge to make educated guesses about meaning and constructions, and to use different reading strategies for different purposes. Each unit contains seven texts using three reading strategies, pre-text and post-text exercises, and a test. The course can be used alone, or as a main or supplemental text in a regular classroom course. The source from which the instructional materials themselves can be obtained is given. (MSE)

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Deborah W. Roney

"Polish for Reading: Individualized Instruction Program"

Work on Individualized Instruction programs for many languages has been going on since 1976. Materials have been developed for Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Latin, Spanish and, through the personal commitment of and a series of grants to Leon Twarog of The Ohio State University Slavic Center, several Slavic languages. In the Slavic field Russian was the pilot program; it was written by Anelya Rugaleva with, for some volumes, various co-authors. These materials were later joined by a program in Polish, and then work on several other Slavic and East European languages began. Since 1983 teams of writers from across the country have come together to produce materials for teaching each of the following languages: Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, Czech, Bulgarian and Hungarian. The Polish materials produced in the summer of 1985 and called Individualized Instruction: Reading Polish 2, An Advanced Course were written by Jerzy Krzyżanowski from The Ohio State University and Deborah W. Roney from the University of New Hampshire. In this paper you will find a description of Individualized Instruction, the goals of Reading Polish 2, the types of materials that have been developed and some possible uses of these materials.

What, exactly, is Individualized Instruction? The name "Individualized Instruction" may bring to mind language-learning materials which the individual buys and takes to a quiet (or not-so-quiet) place where he or she reads and/or listens to them, does exercises with answer keys, and from that learns the language individually, alone, and, by definition, at his or her own pace. Reading Polish 2, as well as the materials of the related programs, do this but add three other, vital components which take them beyond the existing self-help, language-learning materials. Individualized Instruction, or I.I., is really a nickname for what Twarog calls TAMBSPI. This acronym stands for

the essential components of the program, for I.I. is actually "Teacher-Assisted, Mastery-Based, Self-Paced Instruction". Like the self-help programs, I.I. materials do provide self-paced instruction: the student can proceed at whatever pace is suitable for his or her needs and schedule. The three elements which make these materials different from the self-help materials are that they constitute an actual course or courses for which variable credit can be earned, they are Teacher-Assisted and they are Mastery-Based. In a course such as these the student can proceed at any pace, but some students require external motivation so for these students (and, therefore, usually for the program as a whole) it is useful to set a minimum level of material to be covered per semester. Two units seems to be a reasonable requirement: long enough to keep the flow of learning throughout the semester but short enough not to overburden someone with a crowded schedule.

Reading Polish 2, like its companion courses, is a "Teacher-Assisted" course. These materials are designed to be done by the student by working through the book in order. Answer keys are provided so the student can check his or her work alone. However, the student is not left alone with the language but must work on it with a qualified instructor. Some of the higher-level exercises require consultation with an instructor while others are certainly enhanced by student-instructor contact. The student must see the instructor to discuss or check work on certain exercises and to take tests, but contact need not stop here. The role of the instructor is fixed only in terms of the minimum level of contact. Ideally, student-instructor contact will exceed this minimum level as the student can learn much from the instructor. The student can use the instructor for extra conversation practice, for further explanations of the grammar or reading strategies, or as a source of general cultural information. How much interaction there is beyond the prescribed minimum level is limited

only by the instructor's time and the student's level of interest.

As for the Mastery-Based component of the program, the student must, in order to successfully complete the course, master 80% of the material in a given unit before being allowed to continue with the material in the next unit. If the student does not get a score of 80% or better on the unit test, he or she must study some more and then take a different unit test which has a similar structure but different questions than the first variant taken. By reviewing the material until 80% mastery is achieved, the student will have a firm foundation on which to base future work, thus making the learning experience more positive and enjoyable and preventing too many frustrating experiences with the language.

Reading Polish 2 is the self-contained 8th course in a series of Polish Individualized Instruction materials. The first 4 courses are materials, both written and taped, designed to introduce the student to elementary and intermediate Polish grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary and to the four basic language use skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. In these earlier courses the student is guided through the basic textbook, Oscar Swan's First Year Polish. The following two courses, Advanced Polish 1 and Advanced Polish 2 are self-contained materials, that is, there is no additional textbook and they are designed to teach advanced level Polish language skills. In course 7, Reading Polish 1, the emphasis in these materials shifts to primarily developing reading abilities although the student is still provided with opportunities to study advanced-level grammatical topics and to write.

The student who uses Reading Polish 2 is assumed to have completed the preceding 7 courses or their equivalent. That is, the student using Reading Polish 2 brings to the course a solid (Mastery-Based 80%) foundation in Polish grammar, a core vocabulary and an ability to read graded and some ungraded

material. Although we assumed that the majority of students using these materials would be traditional undergraduate or graduate liberal arts students, these materials can be and are being used by non-traditional students as well. A non-traditional student is one who is not regularly enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university. These students can use the materials because of the nature of the TAMBSPI program and because of the specific goals of Reading Polish 2.

Goals of the Materials

Reading Polish 2 sets out to help the student of Polish learn how to read the way a native speaker reads.by reading a variety of authentic reading materials and using different reading strategies for different reading purposes. Thus, the major interest in this course is on the acquisition of particular skills rather than of particular vocabulary, grammar or syntax, although that, of course, also occurs. This is why the course can be useful to students with varying reasons for learning Polish. The course attempts to teach the student 5 basic skills:

1) to read and think critically;
2) to separate fact from opinion or interpretation;
3) to recognize some of the different devices and styles authors use in making different points or in making the same point to different audiences;
4) to use existing knowledge about the world and the Polish language and the context of the passage to make educated guesses about the meaning of unknown vocabulary and constructions;[1] and
5) to use different reading strategies for different purposes; that is, to know what you want from a reading experience before you begin and to read in a way which will best achieve that goal.

These are the sorts of skills that someone reading in his or her native language employs (or should develop and employ), but these skills are not necessarily

transferred when that same person tries to read in another language. This may be because reading purposes are perceived so differently for the two languages or because in the early stages of learning another language such an atomistic approach to sentences or whole reading passages is developed. In the former case, the student's purpose for reading in the foreign language may be simply to practice language use rather than to find out what the passage said, whereas when the student is reading in his or her native language, it is usually for the information or for the pleasure of reading itself. In the latter case, advanced students just continue to use the same reading style they developed when they were first learning the language and had to stop and analyze each sentence or clause or phrase in order to understand it. Most existing textbooks teach reading as a word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase activity, and students then read this way. In either case, it is difficult for the student to break out of these foreign language reading habits without being acted upon by an outside force. Reading Polish 2 sets itself up as this outside force to teach the student to read more efficiently and more successfully and to make the student operate on discourse levels larger than the word, phrase, or sentence.

In the process of teaching the student these general skills, specifically Polish material was used. There were two linguistic goals: 1) to sharpen the student's skill in recognizing Polish word-formation processes, roots and derivational prefixes and suffixes, in an attempt to increase vocabulary quickly and to improve the student's ability to guess at unknown words; and 2) to teach some basic points about sentence and discourse structure. Exercises dealing with both of these linguistic goals were closely tied to the individual reading passages in order to aid the student in reading the assigned material as well as in developing skills which would be usable in other reading

experiences. The idea was to show the student some of the major patterns in the language and how prior knowledge of such patterns can be used to draw inferences in new situations. For example, in preparation for reading a text on the 600th anniversary of the coronation of Jadwiga the student must do exercises on roots such as ślub- and rok- and czas- and also a separate exercise on the suffix -nik. Reading Polish 2 does not purport to be a reference grammar of Polish syntax and word formation patterns but, rather, uses them as an aid to teach students to guess at meanings, to take what they already know and extrapolate from it and not to be intimidated by new vocabulary. By so doing the student can learn some important information about Polish specifically and language in general without being confronted by extensive, intimidating lists and without being distracted from the main goal of acquiring reading skills. In addition, the student's ability to guess from context is improved and a higher level of interest is maintained when he or she has to read the background material about Polish life, history and culture which relates to the reading passages given and which accompanies the linguistic preparatory exercises.

As was stated above, one of the goals of Reading Polish 2 is to teach the student to use different reading strategies for different purposes. There are three basic reading strategies we ask the student to practice and employ: 1) reading for complete comprehension, 2) skimming, and 3) scanning for information. Reading for complete comprehension asks the student to read carefully and understand most of the text. Here the term "complete" may not necessarily apply; these texts vary from those for complete comprehension to those for which the student should comprehend the majority of the text. Skimming is rapid reading to get only the topic or main point of the passage, while scanning is rapid reading used to locate particular information, such as when a movie

starts or who won the soccer match. Scholars who have worked on teaching English as a second language have isolated these different reading strategies and have developed techniques and exercises designed to develop each of these.[2] In Reading Polish 2 several of these techniques have been employed.

In the introductory materials to the course the student is told that these three reading strategies will be used throughout and suggestions are given as to how to do each one. Then, throughout the course the strategy to be used with each text is specified. The types of texts and the types of exercises differ depending on the strategy to be used, and the student has ample opportunity to practice all three. In general, excerpts from literature are used for reading for comprehension, or close reading, practice while skimming and scanning for information skills are practiced on texts from newspapers and periodicals. The idea is that native speakers do not read every text alike, that people have different reasons for reading different texts, and that if the student can recognize his or her purpose for reading before beginning and can ask the appropriate questions: why am I reading this? Do I want information? Do I want a point of view? What is this passage likely to be about?, etc., then the student can read much more effectively and efficiently.

Structure of the Materials

The course materials were written so that everything the student needs for the course except for good Polish-English and English-Polish dictionaries is in one book. The course is divided into 5 units for each of which 1 credit hour is granted. Each unit has seven sections, called Texts. The student works through each text in the unit, doing the exercises and readings in the order presented. There are answer keys provided at the end of the volume for most exercises, and the student can check them as they are completed. At the end of work on each text within the unit the student comes to the instructor to discuss the work on that text: any exercises which do not have

answer keys are corrected and discussed, questions which arose about the text are answered, and a discussion of the reading techniques which worked well and those that did not work as well is held. The student can then, if he/she wishes, also ask related questions or practice speaking Polish. Student-instructor interaction beyond that required in the course is limited in scope and duration only by the parties involved. Although it is recommended that the student see the instructor after each text, it is the case in the earlier courses that the student saves up these visits and comes to the instructor less frequently to cover more material at one meeting. This, too, is possible on this level, but more frequent student-instructor contact not only clears up problem areas before they become too large but also helps motivate the student to continue.

After completing all seven texts in the unit and discussing them with the instructor, the student takes the Unit Test. These tests test both the skills acquired and also information from the unit readings by asking general questions about the readings in the unit and by presenting new but similar texts on which the student must work. Since this is a course on reading skills and not on particular vocabulary, the student is allowed to use a dictionary while taking the test. However, the test has a 50-minute time limit, and unless the student uses the dictionary sparingly and uses his or her knowledge and reading strategies to the utmost, he or she will not finish the test in time. If the student gets a score of 80% or better, work on the next unit may be started. If not, as was mentioned above, the student studies again and takes a second variant of the test. Few students need to take the unit test a third time. For each unit there are 2 variants of the unit test and answer keys for each. These are bound in a separate volume

for the instructor which the student does not see.

Each unit has a cultural theme which most of the texts in the unit are about or are related to. The five themes in this volume are: 1) Tradition and History, 2) The Second World War, 3) Polish Belief Systems, 4) The Family, and 5) Free Time. The unit's theme is presented in an introductory passage in Polish at the beginning of the unit. The student reads this for general information and an understanding of the cultural context in which the texts to be read were written. Usually the student is not given exercises on this material. It is more to set the tone and give the student some reading that is, in a way, just for fun.

The seven texts in each unit cover the three reading strategies: reading for comprehension, skimming and scanning for information. Reading for comprehension is practiced on texts from different sources, both literature and the popular press. All texts used, whether in their entirety or excerpted, are authentic and unedited. The student will read texts written for native Polish speakers by native Polish speakers and in many cases will read an exact copy of the original with typeface, spacing and format retained. Such information helps the reader understand what the author has to say. The readings from literature range from Sienkiewicz and Słowacki to Wyspiański, Tuwim, Andrzejewski, Brandys, Myśliwski and others. The articles from the press are on such topics as Częstochowa, Polish veterans, and how Poles spend their free time. There are also five poems and four humorous short stories included for close reading. These help develop the student's knowledge of sentence structure, devices and genre expectations as well as provide different aesthetic and cultural experiences. When a student does reading for comprehension, the text is read slowly but, at least the first time through, without a dictionary. It is during this type of reading that the student is asked to call on all possible

contextual clues, his or her knowledge of the world and of related Polish vocabulary. Only after trying to understand the passage without using a dictionary and being rewarded by being able to answer questions on the text should the student re-read the text and look up troublesome vocabulary. This challenges the student's "reading = translating" method of operation and forces the student to read in large chunks. This is especially useful since it is quite easy to lose sight of the main point of the passage while you are working on translating some difficult word or phrase.

The skimming and scanning passages are drawn primarily from various Polish newspapers, although some excerpts from a dictionary of Polish writers were also included. As was the case with the passages for close reading, all texts used for developing these skills are authentic and unedited. The articles vary in topic from announcements of political visits and artistic exhibitions, to interviews, to movie listings and even articles about computers and obituaries. When skimming or scanning these articles the student must read quickly, looking only for the answers to particular questions which are posed before the student starts reading. The idea is to teach the student to read with a purpose, a conscious purpose, and, ultimately, to be able to establish the purpose/pose the questions without assistance.

Structure of a Text

What, exactly, is the student asked to do when working on a text? Skimming and scanning texts have pre-text questions which focus the reading and which are answered after looking at the text. On the other hand, every text used for reading for comprehension has a three-part structure: pre-text exercises, the reading passage itself and then exercises on the text. Pre-text exercises may point out new vocabulary, either in lists or in exercises, introduce word-formation processes, provide some grammar reviews or presentation, or suggest

things to look for while reading, either to help develop the reading strategy to be employed or to point out words or constructions of particular interest. The student works through these preparation for reading exercises before tackling the text. Then the text is read using the method suggested. After reading the text the student can refine any answers to pre-text exercises or continue immediately with the exercises on the text. These exercises check comprehension of the text by asking questions about its content, devices or interpretation and give the student the opportunity to use the vocabulary and content of the passage in new ways, such as rewriting the passage from a different point of view, identifying new statements with which the author would be likely to agree, diagramming the action of the story, etc.

The student is also introduced to a new exercise which reviews the material, the Cloze passage. There is a Cloze passage in 4 of the 5 units. A Cloze passage is a passage in which certain words, in this case every fifth one, are omitted and replaced with a blank.[3] The student must fill in the blank with one word which is appropriate grammatically and semantically. The Cloze procedure allows the student to practice his/her knowledge of the language on many levels. A successfully completed Cloze passage shows that the person can use contextual clues to make educated guesses as to what can and cannot be said. Answers may be the same or different from those in the original passage, but they must fit the sentence and discourse structure given. An example of a Cloze follows:

"Za biurkiem, ukryty w _____ siedział człowiek w niebieskiej _____."
(cieniu) (koszulce)

("Behind the desk, covered in _____ sat a man in a blue _____.") In this
(shadows) (shirt)

case the student must fill in each blank with a noun in the prepositional case. All the Cloze passages used in Reading Polish 2 are excerpts from a text the

student has just read so there is no unfamiliar material confronted in these exercises. After doing the Cloze the student compares his or her answers with the original passage and then discusses some of the best and worst guesses with the instructor. The main purpose here is to help the student see why something does or does not fit: the choice is either morphologically, syntactically or semantically right or wrong. Such exercises hone the student's understanding of the structure of the language and of linguistic categories.

Possible Uses

Reading Polish 2 was designed to be part of a full-fledged Individualized Instruction program. Many schools are offering such programs now in one or more languages since these programs allow departments to increase course offerings without needing full classrooms by having 1 instructor offer multiple levels or even multiple languages simultaneously. In addition, Individualized Instruction offers increased flexibility to the traditional student and increased course opportunity to the non-traditional student. Students can go faster or slower than in a regular classroom, and they do not have such tightly restricted schedules for meeting with instructors.

These materials are not, however, limited to use in this way. Some schools offer one or two years of regular classroom instruction in Polish but, for whatever reason, no more than this. What happens to students in such schools if their interest in Polish does not stop after those one or two years? Either they stop anyway or they transfer to another school or they find someone to offer them an independent study course in the language. But independent study is the study of something, something which both student and instructor must identify. Students and instructors in this position could use the Individualized Instruction materials, Reading Polish

1 and Reading Polish 2, as ready-made independent study courses (or as a way to offer additional upper-level Polish courses) with minimal preparatory work by the instructor.

It is also possible to use Reading Polish 1 and Reading Polish 2 as the main or supplemental textbook in a regular classroom course. Although most exercises are self-contained and can easily be corrected by the student, they can serve as good starting points for classroom discussion or other activities. A creative teacher can use the texts and exercises for homework and use the in-class time to develop speaking and listening skills with activities such as debates, interviews, playlets or re-enactments, etc. which could be drawn from the texts.

Reading Polish 2, a self-contained TAMBSPI course, can be used in Individualized Instruction programs, in an advanced Polish classroom or as independent study materials. Because the materials are proficiency-based, students in any format will begin to develop the ability to read as a native speaker does: using different reading styles for different purposes. The materials for all existing levels of instruction for Polish as well as for Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Ukrainian are available through the Slavic Center, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

Notes

[1]Irene Thompson and Joan Rubin (1982), How to Be a More Successful Language Learner, Boston: Heinle & Heinle, Publishers, Inc., pp. 73-78.

[2]Clarke and Silberstein (1977): 143-44 cited in G. Truett Cates and Janet K. Swaffar (1979), Reading a Second Language, in Language in Education: Theory and Practice, ERIC No. 20, pp. 16-17.

[3]Jacqueline Neufeld and Marion Webb (1984), 25 Strategies: Reading Skills for Intermediate - Advanced Students of English as a Second Language, CBS College Publishing: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp. 201-205.